



MEMO



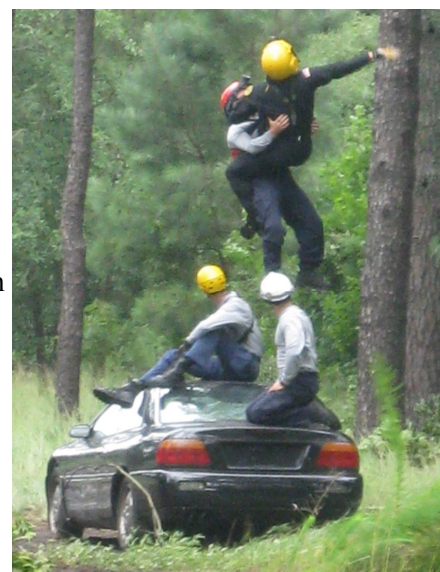
N O R T H C A R O L I N A D I V I S I O N O F
E M E R G E N C Y M A N A G E M E N T

Reflecting Back on 2009: A Year of Preparedness, Training and Response for State Emergency Management

‘Be prepared’ is known as the Boy Scout motto, but that same concept drives the work of the N.C. Division of Emergency Management.

Scout founder Sir Robert Baden-Powell fully understood how vital preparedness is when he explained, “The meaning of the motto is that a scout must prepare himself by previous thinking out and practicing how to act on any accident or emergency so that he is never taken by surprise.”

During 2009, NCEM held more than 80 classes across the state this year to train fire, rescue, law enforcement and emergency management personnel and community leaders how to respond to various types of crisis. Courses included: disaster recovery and response, mass shootings response, managing people in disasters, hazardous chemical response, managing debris after a disaster, the incident command system, handling mass fatalities, assessing damages from disasters, and managing mass care for communities.



Helo-Aquatic Rescue Teams train together for three days in Greenville.

Leaning Forward	Pg 3
SERC Meeting	Pg 4
Storms Keep EM Busy	Pg 5
EM Forum	Pg 5
N.C. State Exercise	Pg 6

“Disasters start locally and end locally,” said Doug Hoell, director of NCEM. “Our job is to be prepared and support those cities, counties and regions in whatever way we can through coordinated training and by providing resources to respond to and recover from a disaster.”

In addition, the division helped plan, coordinate, fund and implement dozens of local or regional training exercises to give local and state agencies the opportunity to test their communication, coordination and response skills before an incident occurs. Many of the exercises involved multiple jurisdictions and/or were conducted over several days. For instance, dozens of agencies worked together in a 30-hour search and rescue training session, a one-day terrorism exercise and a combination hazardous materials response/shooter training event. And some proved to be a first of their kind in the state. Some of the more notable exercises during 2009 included:

Helo-Aquatic Rescue Team training – Two dozen first responder, law enforcement and medical agencies train in August with National Guard airmen for three days to practiced their ability to rescue victims by extracting them from severely flooded areas via helicopter. (See September *MEMO* for more information.)

Communications exercise – Nine piedmont counties participated in a regional communications exercise in April ensuring that law enforcement, first responders and emergency management staff can communicate easily and quickly with each other during a crisis.

Nuclear power plant exercises— Emergency management, police, fire, rescue, sheriff, highway patrol, school officials and others from the state and counties practiced their ability to notify and protect the public in the unlikely event of an incident at the Harris or McGuire nuclear power plants, with drills held in March and August respectively.

Community Emergency Response Teams training – Volunteers from various communities, including college and high school campuses, learned the basics of disaster response in courses throughout the year so they can help their neighbors in the early minutes and hours following a disaster.

Governor's hurricane exercise – Cabinet and Council of State leaders and Governor's Office staff discussed and rehearsed their roles and responsibilities in preparing for, responding to and recovering from a hurricane in this first-ever such exercise conducted for the governor's staff.

Other first-of-their-kinds included a two-day statewide earthquake exercise with first responder and emergency management staff from 18 counties and five colleges, as well as a four-day resource tracking exercise that evaluated the state's ability to process and move resources and personnel in and out of the state following an emergency. The latter served as the foundation for a national training model.

While NCEM is responsible for coordinating classes and conducting exercises, its primary focus is providing support to local communities responding to disasters.

"There are three ways to learn or sharpen skills," Hoell said. "First you study them, then you practice them and then you perform them."

During the past year, state emergency management employees assisted with numerous search and rescue missions, including a ground search for two missing siblings in a national park and several helo-aquatic rescue missions. NCEM also sent urban search and rescue crews to find and recover victims from the ConAgra plant explosion in Garner.

Employees received and then distributed the state's initial shipments of H1N1 flu vaccine to each of the state's 100 counties. In addition, DEM staff responded to fires at the Severn Peanut factory in Northampton County and at a tire storage facility in Chadbourne. And state emergency management staff responded to numerous other fires, chemical leaks, hazardous material spills, train car derailments and plane crashes.

When disaster does strike, the agency works with local communities to help their residents and businesses recover as quickly as possible from the event. Damage assessment teams from the county, state and sometimes federal governments inventory the destruction to determine what financial assistance may be available to help the disaster victims. This year, NCEM helped residents and businesses recover from tornados in Nash, Johnson, Wake and Wilson counties; flooding in Craven and New Hanover counties, a rockslide in Haywood County and a nor'easter in Currituck and Dare counties.

NCEM implemented a new program in four pilot counties Durham, Edgecombe, Macon and New Hanover to help identify potential hazards vulnerability in local buildings. Collected data will be used to assess the level of risk and probability that each facility has for being impacted by flood, tornado, hurricane or other such natural disaster. Community leaders and state officials can then plan ways to minimize risks and potential service disruptions.



Tire storage facility fire in Chadbourne, N.C.

In addition, the division installed stream and rain gauges in the western part of the state to alert local and state officials early to potential flooding in major river basins.

Working closely with several other state departments, the division purchased equipment to better accommodate evacuees. For instance, NCEM installed 17 mass care support trailers to provide equipment for the medically fragile community so those with special medical needs can be housed in public shelters during evacuations. The agency also purchased 15 companion animal mobile equipment trailers to enable evacuees to bring their domestic pets with them to a shelter and bought two mobile pharmacy trailers to dispense necessary medications following a disaster.

(See the October *MEMO* for more information about support for those with special medical needs and the December *MEMO* for a story on the animal trailers.)

The division developed a web-based inventory of available resources for 13 northeastern counties to help it share resources in response to a disaster. NCEM also developed points of distribution plans for communities to ensure that life-sustaining commodities such as food, water and tarps are distributed after disasters.

Leaning Forward In 2010

To help ensure that North Carolina is prepared for any type of disaster, NCEM has established several goals for the new year.

Communications Center

The state's communications center serves as the initial point of contact for local emergency managers to report incidents or to request state resources. Managed by Clay Benton, the center is staffed 24 hours a days, seven days a week. The center's primary goal for 2010 is to expand the WinLink system and incorporate it into more exercises. (WinLink was spotlighted in the November *MEMO*.)



Chris Tant and Jennifer Robinson staff the Communications Center.

Human Services

The Human Services section oversees programs that directly touch North Carolina residents during their times of greatest need. Under the direction of Warren Moore, the section works with the public sheltering system and nonprofit agencies during major events and also manages the companion animal mobile equipment trailer and the mass care support trailer programs. The section's goal for the year is to conduct a survey of mass care, emergency assistance, housing and human services programs administered to local governments and its citizens during disasters.

Emergency Services

The Emergency Services section, managed by Todd Brown, coordinates training and exercises and deploys hazmat Regional Response Teams and various search and rescue teams. The group's goal for 2010 is to develop and hold two hazmat exercises with multiple regional response teams and to further integrate hazmat response into the urban search and rescue program. The Garner ConAgra Plant explosion last summer highlighted the need for such coordinated response. (See the July *MEMO* for more information.)

Hazards Planning

The Hazards Planning section, managed by Ed Jenkins, oversees the development of all emergency response plans including weather-related, radiological emergency preparedness, emergency planning and community right-to-know plans. Their 2010 goal is to develop and implement a management review program that measures the division's capabilities and evaluates any project's progress.

Homeland Security

The Homeland Security section manages federal grants and coordinates planning activities that help local and state partners strengthen their capabilities to respond to disasters. Managed by John Yarboro, the section's goal for 2010 is to implement a web-based electronic grant management system that will allow all applicants to submit and better monitor their grant project application status.



Regional Response Teams plan to train with search and rescue crews to sharpen skills and improve response.

Training and Exercise

As the name implies, this section administers or oversees all training and exercises for the division. Managed by Diane Benton, the section also serves as the point of contact for all federal training opportunities. Their goal for 2010 is to implement a new statewide training website for all emergency management and first responder classes and credentialing.

Resource Operations

The Resource Operations section, managed by Paul Latham, oversees stock commodities and state contracts for additional goods. This group also works with the division's partners to ensure their viable resources are federally categorized, recorded and available when needed. The section's goal for this year is to implement Point of Distribution planning at the local level to ensure life-sustaining commodities are distributed after disasters. (See the April and October *MEMOs* for more information.)

Continued on page 4

Individual Assistance

The Individual Assistance section, managed by Carol Ingram, ensures that all North Carolina residents have access to state and federal programs that can help them recover from a disaster. The section's goal for 2010 is to complete the state disaster housing strategy and distribute the plan to all 100 counties.

Public Assistance

The Public Assistance section, managed by Joe Stanton, provides funding to state, local and certain private, nonprofit institutions to repair or replace public properties damaged or destroyed by a declared major disaster. Their 2010 goal is to continue to reconcile and close past disasters.

Hazard Mitigation

The Hazard Mitigation section, managed by Chris Crew, helps citizens, state and local officials and business leaders reduce the impact of natural hazards on homes, businesses and communities by acquiring homes in high hazard areas, elevating flood-prone properties or helping local entities update their hazard mitigation plans. The section's 2010 goal is to continue to close out past disasters.

Hazard Risk Mitigation

The Hazard Risk Mitigation section, managed by John Dorman, provides a multi-dimensional view, drawn to scale, of physical locations in North Carolina to help emergency management officials evaluate potential hazardous problems as the state's infrastructure is developed. The section's 2010 goals include: modeling critical infrastructure failure interdependencies, modeling consequence methodologies, conducting risk assessments, and developing tools for enhanced risk communications.

Flood Warning

The Flood Warning section, managed by David Herlong, produces maps in real time that depict currently flooded areas or areas that are expected to become flooded in the coming hours or days. Their 2010 goal is to establish alert notification triggers for rain gages in the eastern part of the state, and to establish a website citizens can reference during weather-related events.

Information Technology

The Information Technology section, managed by Pete Farmer, maintains all computer systems including the North Carolina State Preparedness and Resource Tracking Application (NCSPARTA). More commonly known as WebEOC, this web-based critical incident management system is used by the state emergency management team to request and track resources and to monitor events in real time. The IT sections goal for the year is to implement additional resource management boards and maps and continue to improve the system.

Branch Offices

The three branch offices that make up the division's field staff are responsible for assisting the counties with whatever they need before, during and after an incident. The field staff is the first state point of contact at the scene of an incident in order to offer the state's assistance.

The Eastern, Central and Western Branch Offices are managed by Mark Brown, Joe Wright and Mike Cook, respectively. Their goals for the new year are: to improve customer service through better communication and response time; to increase training for their assigned counties; and to further develop the incident management team program to ensure teams are mission ready.

As subsequent programs are developed, they too, will be highlighted in future issues of the *MEMO*.

State Emergency Response Commission to Meet

The North Carolina State Emergency Response Commission will meet Jan. 15 in Raleigh to discuss homeland security grant program funding for fiscal year 2010. North Carolina Emergency Management's Homeland Security section will seek approval from the commission on various projects submitted by North Carolina counties and municipalities.

For more information, contact John Yarboro at 919-715-8000 ext 340 or jyarboro@ncem.org.

Storms Keep Emergency Management Busy

Several winter storms kept local and state emergency management officials busy in December.

On Dec. 18, a storm dumped between two and 12 inches of snow in much of the central and western parts of the state. Twelve counties and the state activated their emergency operations centers to respond to the winter weather event. N.C. Emergency Management was staffed with essential personnel only, while state emergency response team partners were briefed on activities and weather conditions via conference calls and WebEOC.



Power line crew works to restore power in Little Switzerland

Portions of the Triad received between six and eight inches of snow, but the mountains were hit the hardest. Asheville received 17 inches of snow, Little Switzerland got up to 22 inches and Burnsville received 24 inches.

The N.C. Department of Transportation pre-treated all major roadways with a salt brine solution to keep the highways operational. Still, the Dec. 18 storm caused more than 2,400 highway accidents and left tens of thousands of residents without power. The N.C. National Guard sent 24 soldiers in ten Humvees from the Hendersonville and Marion armories to rescue stranded motorists.

Governor Purdue declared a state of emergency to ensure enough state resources would be made available for response and recovery efforts. Emergency shelters were opened in Buncombe, Madison and McDowell counties to accommodate travelers stranded by miles-long backups on I-40 and I-26.

On Christmas Day, an ice storm brought freezing rain and high winds to the mountains which toppled trees and left up to 14,000 residents without power. The National Weather service issued flood warnings for much of the area due to the melting snow from the earlier storm, combined with an additional two inches of rain from the Christmas storm. This flooding saturated the ground causing more trees and power lines to fall under the weight of the ice.

Watauga County Emergency Management staff and telecommunicators in the 911 center spent Christmas day and night working in response to the storm.

Emergency Management Forum Scheduled for Jan. 13

The North Carolina Emergency Management forum is scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 13 at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. and last till 4 p.m.

The forum will include brief presentations on numerous different topics, such as: implementing the points of distribution plan, emergency planning for licensed care facilities, social media's applications in emergency management, special needs registry, and an overview of the 2010 homeland security projects.

For those unable to travel, the forum also will be held via ConnectPro, a web conferencing and seminar software that allows conference attendees to view and participate from their personal computer.

The forum is held twice annually as a way for local and state emergency management officials to discuss potential threats, legislative changes or other issues that impact the emergency management community. For more information, contact Brenda Jones at 919-715-9216 or bmjones@ncem.org.

N.C. State Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery Exercise

On Dec. 8, N.C. Emergency Management staff watched N.C. State University staff rehearse the university's continuity plan and test their ability to recover from a hazardous chemical spill on campus. More than 100 staff members, including administrators from the finance, human resources, public affairs and chancellor's offices, participated in the tabletop drill.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency graded the exercise and evaluated the university's ability to alert the appropriate response agencies, personnel, departments and functional areas that are essential for school operations. FEMA also evaluated the university's ability to relocate important offices to other locations out of the danger zone.

Photographs from the exercise can be viewed at www.ncsu.edu/ehs/BCP/BCP/BCP.html. For more information, contact Sharon Winstead at 919-715-9214 or swinstead@ncem.org.



4713 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-4713

Questions and Comments can be directed to:

Cory Grier, Public Affairs Section
919-733-3824 Email: cgrier@ncem.org

"In the Business of Saving Lives and Protecting Property"

The North Carolina Division of Emergency Management was formed in 1977 to coordinate the preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation activities of all agencies for emergency management within North Carolina. It performs this mission by planning, organizing, staffing, equipping, training, testing and activating emergency management programs during times of need.